

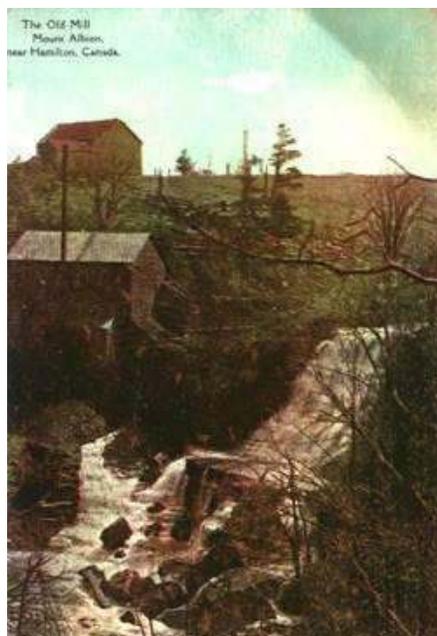
Cultural History of Hamilton's Waterfalls

The City of Hamilton is blessed with waterfalls that tumble over the Niagara Escarpment in abundance; there are so many waterfalls in fact that some call Hamilton the “City of Waterfalls”. Waterfalls have been known within the City of Hamilton for centuries. Some families would locate their residence near waterfalls in order to maintain a livelihood through industrial practices that take advantage of streams and waterfalls for power generation. In the Hamilton area some of these industries included grist mills, saw mills, paper mills, flour mills, and even blacksmithing. Other waterfalls have histories that include native folklore. Below are the histories and vintage postcards of some of the more well known waterfalls within the City.

An excerpt from Gibbon & Larson’s 1995 book entitled *On the Edge: Artistic Visions of a Shrinking Landscape* aptly quotes Farrell Boyce describing the cultural significance of waterfalls in the City of Hamilton:

“As dwellers on the land, in contact with the soil and seasons, we can fashion a home, an identity, from what we find around us and from what we bring to it. The land has the power to shape us, to bring us together... We might say of ourselves, ‘We are the people of the Bay, we are the city of waterfalls.’”

Albion Falls



The Old Mill, Mount Albion near Hamilton, Canada
unused

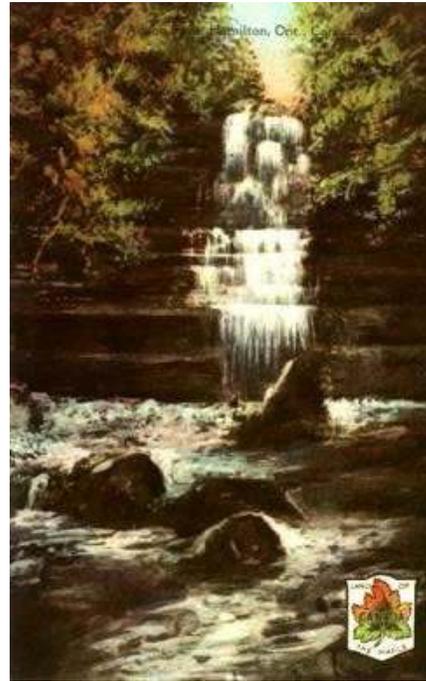
In 1792 a grist mill was erected near Albion Falls in Barton Township by William Davis. Not far from the grist mill, a saw mill was also built to serve a small but growing community. This community hosted three hotels, a general store, and a blacksmith shop. The grist mill changed hands several times over the years, but by the early 1900’s the small vibrant village called Albion Mills was all but forgotten. Albion was a poetic version of the name ‘Britain’. Not far from the original location of the mill in King’s Forest Park is one of the mill stones with a commemorative plaque. Albion Falls was once seriously considered as a possible source of water for Hamilton. Rocks for the Albion Falls area were used in the construction of the Royal Botanical Gardens’ Rock Garden. The ravine at Albion Falls is also known as ‘Lover’s Leap’ as a result of a woman named Jane Riley. In the early 19th century, young Jane Riley who was disappointedly in love with a man named Joseph Rousseau stood at the top of a steep cliff not far from the thundering Albion Falls and flung herself to the bottom of the ravine.



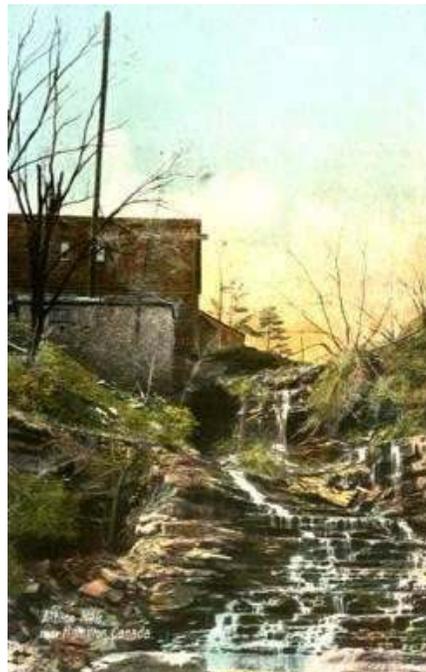
Mount Albion Falls Near Hamilton
*Valentine-Black Co. Ltd., Toronto, Canada
unused*



Falls and Ravine Mt. Albion
*O. E. Co. Made in Canada
unused*



Albion Falls
*The Post Card & Greeting Card Co. Ltd., Toronto
unused*



Albion Mills
*Private Post Card
The Pugh Manufacturing Co., Toronto
unused*

Billy Green Falls

Billy Green Falls was named by the Project Advisory Team to recognize William Green, traditionally known as 'Billy Green the Scout', who was born on February 4, 1794 in Saltfleet Township, Upper Canada. His father, Adam Green, a New Jersey Loyalist, fought in the American Revolution and after the war ended he moved his family north. He received a land grant of 300 acres at the top of the escarpment and around 1792 built a flour mill. Billy was the eleventh and last child born to Adam and Martha Green. His mother died a year or so after his birth and Billy was raised by his oldest sister. He grew up to be adventurous and a natural woodsman. During the War of 1812, Billy and his brother Levi scouted the movement of the American troops in the area. Billy learned the American password, 'Wil-Hen-Har' from his brother-in-law, Isaac Corman, who had been held prisoner by the Americans. Billy took this information to the British troops that were stationed at Burlington Heights. With this information along with prior knowledge gleaned by their own scouts, the British decided on a night attack on the American encampment in Stoney Creek. Because of Billy's knowledge of the terrain, he led the British soldiers on their 3-hour march to confront the American troops. The short but fierce battle that ensued on June 6, 1813, was the Battle of Stoney Creek. The result was a major British victory and the Americans retreated. In 1875, at the age of 81, Billy Green was awarded a pension for his war service. He died in 1877 and although the location of his grave is unknown, a memorial stone was erected in his memory.

Borer's Falls
(a.k.a. Rock Chapel Falls)

This waterfall once powered a sawmill in the village of Rock Chapel which was owned by the Borer family for more than 100 years. It was land clearing in the area that altered the course and flow of Borer's Creek to such an extent that eventually there was insufficient waterflow at this site to power the mill. The Borer family did not abandon their sawmill at this time but changed to steam power to run the mill. Descendants of the Borer family still live in the area today.



Borer's Falls - Dundas, Ont.
Canadian Souvenir Post Card
Warwick Bro's & Rutter,
Limited, Publishers, Toronto
Postmarked July 1, 1907

Buttermilk Falls

(a.k.a. Inglis/Ingles Falls)

The origin of the name Buttermilk Falls is one that is left up for discussion, however Inglis / Ingles Falls is aptly named since the Historical Atlas of Wentworth County (1875) shows the land that Buttermilk Falls is situated was owned by Reverend David Ingles. Rev. Ingles was the owner of the Burning Springs estate and Minister of MacNab Street Presbyterian Church in central Hamilton for 17 years. It is unclear why this falls was renamed to Buttermilk Falls, however some believe that the odour or colour of the water flowing over Buttermilk Falls was likened to that of buttermilk, since some of the receiving flow drained through the "Mountain Ditch" prior to the development of the Hamilton's east mountain. Alternatively, it is thought that the area above the Escarpment adjacent to the falls was used for dairy cattle farming and therefore associating the falls to buttermilk.

**Chedoke
Falls**

There are many theories to the origin of the name of Chedoke Falls. One of the most common theories is that Chedoke was a First Nations word, perhaps Iroquoian or Algonkian, and meant a collection of oaks. Captain W. F. Moore supports this theory in his 1930 writing “Indian Place Names in the Province of Ontario” by stating that the word Chedoke is not really an Indian name but a corruption of two English words ‘seven oaks’. It is suggested that the Native Indians caught the sounds of these two words and changed ‘seven oaks’ to Chedoke. Another theory is that Chedoke is derived from the Anishnabek language where ‘Gchi’ means ‘big’, ‘Wiidoke’ means ‘healing’, and ‘Gamig’ means place. The property perched at the edge of Chedoke Ravine near Garth St. and Fennell Ave. W. is the first property in Hamilton to carry the name ‘Chedoke’. This property is said to be the original site of the seven oaks, three of which still stand and all are at least 150 years old. The Ravine, Chedoke Falls and Chedoke Woods all derive their name from this original Chedoke property.



Chedoke Falls
W. G. MacFarlane Publ., Toronto and Buffalo
Printed in Germany
Postmarked August 22, 1911

Chedoke Falls
International Stationery Co.,
Picton, Canada
Printed in Saxony
unused



Chedoke Falls, near Hamilton, Ont.

**Darnley
Cascade**

**(a.k.a. Stutt's
Falls / Crooks
Hollow Falls)**

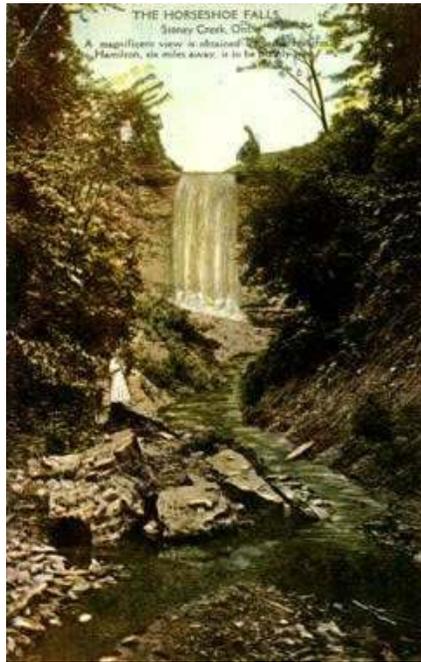
This waterfall is named after a grist mill that was situated near this waterfall. This area had its industrial beginnings in 1801 when Jonathon Morden, a sawyer by trade built a sawmill on Spencer Creek in what is now known as Crooks Hollow. James Crooks, a Scottish man who immigrated to Upper Canada in his early teens, constructed a new dam and sluice south of the Morden property and completed his mill in 1813. This mill was named Darnley Grist Mill after the Scottish hero Lord Darnley. It was no surprise when Crooks installed four run of stone in his mill so that he could grind a greater variety of grains as he was an industrialist who went on to build an industrial empire that was the largest in Upper Canada, and massive even by today's standards. By 1829, the 'company town' had grown to include Darnley Mill, a distillery, linseed oil mill, cooperage, tannery, woolen mill, card clothing factory, foundry, agricultural implement factory, paper mill, log cabins for the works, a general store, and an inn. In 1860 however, after the death of James Crooks, the mill was sold to James Stutt and Robert Sanderson who converted Darnley Grist Mill to a paper mill, known today as the Stutt Paper Mill. In 1880 Stutt bought out Sanderson and added a steam boiler building for heating the water for paper-making and power generation. On July 9, 1885, the boiler exploded causing much damage and killing two men. The mill was rebuilt and remained in operation until 1902 when William Stutt succeeded this father as owner. The mill was then leased throughout the 1920's and 30's, until 1934 when the mill was gutted by fire and left in ruins. The HCA purchased the mill in 1969.



Stutt's Falls - Dundas, Ontario
*Warwick Bro's & Rutter,
Limited, Printers, Toronto
Postmarked February 12, 1911*

**Devil's
Punchbowl
Falls**

**(a.k.a.
Horseshoe
Falls)**



The Horseshoe Falls, Stoney Creek
Ontario Engraving Company
Hamilton unused

There is a possibility that this waterfall was named Devil's Punchbowl because of the home brew which, at one time, was bootlegged in the surrounding woods. Another story suggests that people, who saw the beautiful sight as God's work, knew that God would not want something named after Him, decided to name it after the devil instead. Today a 10 metre high cross monument stands in Devil's Punch Bowl Conservation Area, which is owned and managed by the Hamilton Conservation Authority. This cross was erected by William Sinclair on December 18, 1966 in order to bring a little light to the world through this huge monument. The cross is lighted by 106 light bulbs and it was originally planned that the cross would help celebrate Christmas and Easter. The lighted cross monument has shone every night of the year since 1991 thanks to donations made by the Stoney Creek branch of the Knights of Columbus.

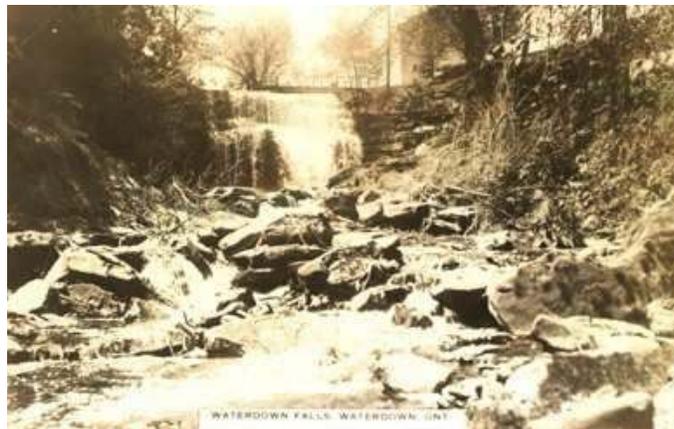
Dundas Falls This waterfall and the adjacent property were owned by the Fisher family. In July 1863, John Fisher bought the Gore Paper Mills on the same property. The Gore Mills made newsprint, carpet, felt, and paper (including wrapping paper). Although the paper mill was known to run day and night when the waterflow was good, all of the mills were torn down in 1929 to provide a site for a school.

Erland Falls This waterfall was named by the Project Advisory Team to recognize Erland Lee. Erland Lee inherited the house at the top of Dewitt Rd. near Erland Falls, which is now known as the Erland Lee House Museum. Although six generations of the Lee family lived in the house between 1808 and 1972, Erland and his wife, Janet, lived in the home following their marriage in 1890. Both Erland and Janet were instrumental in founding of the Women's Institute in 1897. A broad-minded and liberal farmer, Erland Lee invited Mrs. Adelaide Hoodless to speak in Stoney Creek in February 1897 on the need to educate rural women. From that initial speech, the founding of the new women's organization took shape under auspices of the Lees. The focal point of the house's history is the dining room, where the Constitution and By-Laws of the first Women's Institute in the world were hand-penned by Janet Lee February 19, 1897.

Felker's Falls The Felker family owned the property on which this waterfall is located for over 140 years. Born Johann Friedrich Voelkel, John Frederick Felker (1757-1838) emigrated from Prussia to America before purchasing Lot 30, 6th Concession and Lot 27, 7th Concession, Saltfleet Township, Wentworth County in February 1820. Mr. Felker and his wife, Mary, raised seven children on this land until he died in November 1838. At that time, his eldest son, John Frederick Felker II, (1794-1880) inherited the farm and he and his wife, Mary, raised their thirteen children. Following Frederick's possession of the land his sons divided the land and Frederick's youngest son, Hiram Albert Felker (1844-1911), inherited the property on which the falls is located, Lot 30, 6th Concession. Joseph Benjamin Felker (1880-1956) was one of Hiram and Mary's, his wife, nine children and he lived all his life on the Felker's Falls property farming the land. In 1961, Joseph died and his children sold the property to a construction company, however the land later became part of an acquisition program along the Niagara Escarpment to save and protect the natural land. Hamilton Conservation Authority now owns and manages this land. The Felker Family Cemetery still remains on the old homestead on Mud St. at First Rd. W. and here you can find all those who originally lived on the land that Felker's Falls is located.

Great Falls It is believed that Alexander Brown, the first settler to own land on Grindstone Creek, built the first mill on the lip of Great Falls before 1805 and as a result started the industry that would support the growth for the new village of Waterdown. This mill was the nucleus for a cluster of mills that eventually became a little industrial complex known as Smokey Hollow. These mills thrived for 100 years surviving small periodic fires, and even though the decision of a railway to bypass the town had already doomed their business it was not until a fire in 1912 that caused the mill owners to retire. Additionally this site, where Grindstone Creek plunges over the Niagara Escarpment, spawned the name of Waterdown in 1840.

(a.k.a.
**Waterdown
 Falls,
 Grindstone
 Falls, Smokey
 Hollow Falls)**



Waterdown Falls,
 Waterdown, Ont.
Postmarked illegible

The Falls, Waterdown, Ont.
*Private Post Card
 F. W. Crooker, Waterdown, Ont.
 unused*



The Falls, Waterdown, Ont.

The Falls, Waterdown, Ont.
F. W. Crooker, Waterdown, Ont.
Postmarked illegible



The Falls, Waterdown, Ont.
G. J. Y.

**Hermitage
Cascade**

(a.k.a.
**Hermitage
Falls)**

The land that this waterfall is located on was originally named The Hermitage in 1833 by Otto Ives. In 1855 George Browne Leith bought the property and built the Hermitage mansion in 1855 as a summer home. Mr. Leith died on January 2, 1887 and the following summer Mr. Leith's son, Alexander, and his daughter-in-law, Mary, moved into The Hermitage with Mrs. Leith. In 1902, The Hermitage was purchased by a relative named Alma Dick-Lauder for \$5 500. Even though the mansion was completely destroyed by fire on October 10, 1934, Alma lived in a small dwelling inside the ruins after the fire until the home and property were sold outside of the family. The Hamilton Conservation Authority purchased a portion of the estate in 1972 which included this cascade.

**Mill Falls &
Lower Mill
Falls**

(a.k.a. **Wilson
Falls)**

These waterfalls are named after the flour mills that were once active on this property. The first three mills built on the site were destroyed by fire. The fourth stone flour mill was built in 1863. The building was constructed with limestone blocks taken from the same property and its walls are four feet thick at the base. This flour mill is one of the most substantial stone structures in Ontario. In 1972 the Ciancone family bought this property and established the 'Ancaster Old Mill Restaurant' in 1978.

**Mineral
Springs Falls**

Mineral Springs Falls is named after the hamlet of Mineral Springs. Captain John Aikman was one of the earliest settlers to Mineral Springs arriving in 1783, building a home and later a grist mill. In the early years Mineral Springs was known as an important industrial centre and the coming of the railway in 1895 (Toronto, Hamilton and Buffalo Railway) gave new life to the hamlet. A post office was established in 1896 which continued until 1908 when Rural Free Delivery commenced. At this time Mineral Springs became known as R.R.#3, Dundas.

**Progreton
Falls**

This site saw many industries over the years. At this site there were three saw mills, two grist mills, a peg factory and a blacksmith shop. A man named Andrew Patton once owned a shingle and sawmill on this site, as well as a second building intended for a grist mill. It was this second building that was purchased by Freeman Green in 1869. Mr. Green used it as a woolen mill. This woolen mill was known for the splendid quality of its product. After the death of Freeman Green, his son Peter carried on the business for 36 years until the mill was destroyed by fire in 1911.

**Sanatorium
Falls (Upper
& Lower)**



Santatorium Ravine in Winter
unused

The Mountain Sanatorium was opened in 1906 for patients with tuberculosis. It began with only two tents but then small frame cottages were built. Later, when the fresh air treatment for TB patients was obsolete, brick and mortar buildings were built. During the 1st World War the Government of Canada used the facility to treat soldiers who returned suffering from TB and mustard gas afflictions. Around this time there were concrete steps on the west side of the falls and a bridge across the top of the falls which led to a long series of wooden stairs down the east side of the ravine to the Branford and Hamilton Electric Railway Company (radial) line. This enabled the hospital staff and their families who lived on the hospital site to board the radial trail for schooling, shopping, etc. in the city. There are still traces of concrete steps and abutments at the top of the ravine and of concrete columns, which supported the stairs, further down the ravine.



Ravine, Mountain Sanatorium
unused

**Sherman
Falls

(a.k.a.
Smith's Falls,
Whitton
Falls, Fairy
Falls, Angel
Falls)**

This waterfall is known by many names depending on who owned the property at the time. Samuel Smith, the Egleston family, and Francis Whitton all owned the land at one time. However, it was Francis Whitton who landscaped the land with spacious lawns and beautiful gardens, and built a large elegant home, garage greenhouse, and gardener's cottage. The Whitton home was then sold to the Sherman family. Clifton Sherman, an American with years of experience in foundry management, established the Dominion Foundries and Steel Co. (Dofasco) in 1912. As a result, the Sherman family became well-known in the local community. The Sherman family managed the plant for decades until Frank Sherman recently stepped down as Chairman.

Sydenham Falls
(a.k.a. Upper Sydenham Falls, Logie Falls)

Sydenham Creek is the source of all three Sydenham Falls (including Middle & Lower) and all are located adjacent to Sydenham Road. Thus they all bear the name Sydenham. Sydenham Rd., named after Baron Charles E.P.T. Sydenham, Governor-General of Upper Canada from 1839-1841, was a profitable project from the beginning. As the need to access to the townships “on top of the hill” was increased following the construction of the Desjardins Canal, George Rolph built Sydenham Rd. as a private toll-gate road in 1845. Since Sydenham Rd. overlooked a previous attempt to traverse the Escarpment, aptly named Horse Kill Rd as it did just that, farmers were more than willing to pay Mr. Rolph for use of his new roadway. After Mr. Rolph’s death in 1875, the roadway exchanged hands a couple of times until it became a public roadway, and one of the Queen’s Highways, in 1891 when the Township of Flamborough and the Town of Dundas purchased their respective portions of the road for \$1570.00. Prior to the development of Sydenham Rd. it is believed that William Lyon MacKenzie, while escaping from the result of his collapse in Toronto, followed the edge of this planned road, successfully evading the authorities waiting for him at the “hotel”. In the winter Sydenham Rd. was a perfect toboggan run as the lookout at the top of the hairpin turn was enough to give a clear signal for those to fly all the way to King St. For those less inclined to take their chances at the toboggan there were sleigh rides which echoed the sound of sleigh bells all the way into Dundas.

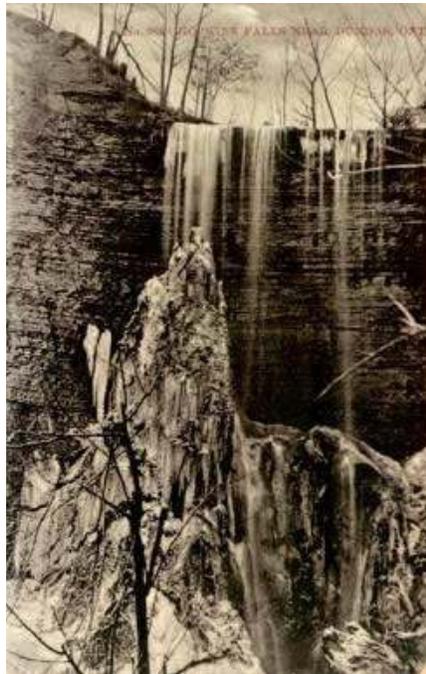
Tew’s Falls
(a.k.a. Hopkins Falls, Tunis Falls)

Johnson Tew came to Canada in 1874 and purchased Lot 12, Concession 2 in Flamborough Township which included Tew’s Falls and the ravine. Mr. Tew was elected a Municipal Councillor in 1905 and was Reeve of the Township of Flamborough for seven years between 1913 and 1926. He was also elected Warden of Wentworth County for one year in 1924. Mr. Tew owned this property until March 12, 1948 when he passed away. In the 1960’s the Spencer Creek Conservation Authority (forerunner to the HCA) purchased the land from the family and this area is now known as the Spencer Gorge / Webster’s Falls Conservation Area.



Hopkin's Ravine, Dundas, Ont.
Canadian Souvenir Post Card
Published for W.N. Braund, Stationer
and Druggist, Dundas, Ont.
Published by Warwick Bro's & rutter,
Limited, Publishers, Toronto
Postmarked September 3, 1908

Tew's Falls, Dundas
*Rumsey & Co., Ltd., 1528 Queen
Street West, Toronto, Canada
unused*



Hopkins Falls near Dundas, Ont.
*Private Post Card
Stedman Bros., Brantford, Canada
Made in Germany
Postmarked September 30, 1907*

Tiffany Falls This waterfall is named after the first known physician in Ancaster, Dr. Oliver Tiffany. Dr. Tiffany began his practice sometime between 1796 and 1798. Born in Norton, Mass., the son of Dr. Gideon Tiffany, Oliver graduated from Dartmouth College in 1786 and later qualified as a physician at the Philadelphia Medical College. Despite the fact his father had served as a rebel in the American Revolutionary War, Oliver and his two brothers, Gideon and George Sylvester, successfully applied for land grants in Canada. Gideon and George settled in Niagara, where George published the Niagara Constellation. Oliver came further west, first to Grimsby in 1796 and then to Ancaster, where he settled. He built his home on the property where Tiffany Falls and Tiffany Creek flow, on the north side of Rousseaux Street (formerly Mohawk Rd.) and west of Filman Rd.

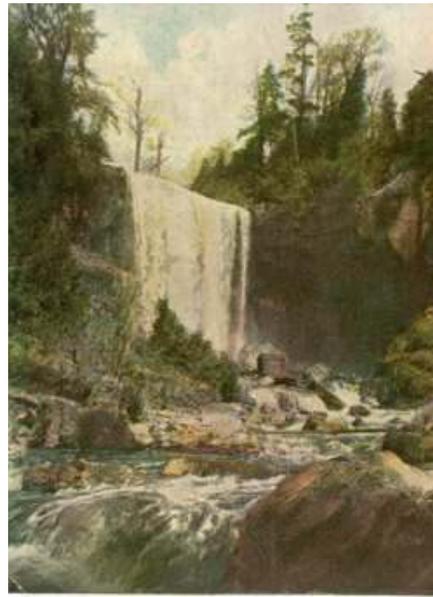
Tiffany Ravine, near Dundas, Ont.
Canadian Souvenir Post Card
W. N. Baund, Stationer and Druggist
Postmarked March 30, 1907



Webster's Falls The waterfall and surrounding land was purchased in 1819 by the Webster family. Their family manor still stands on the Webster's Falls Road and family gravestones have been preserved in a small area near the parking lot. A story of native folklore also surrounds this site. In the area now known as Westover, lived an Attiwendaron chieftan and his princess daughter. Although the princess had fallen in love with a high-ranking Indian from the Seneca Nation, she was promised in marriage to a young chief of the Erie Nation. The cheiftan threatened to imprison the princess unless she agreed to marry the chosen chief from the Erie Nation. The young lovers, realizing the hopelessness of their situation, locked in each other's arms, jumped over Webster's Falls to meet their death in the rock pool below. Legend has it that whenever the water level is high and the air is filled with a silvery mist from the full moon, the princess and her lover can be seen to rise to the edge of the cliff, where they again pledge their endless love to one another.

(a.k.a. Spencer Falls, Hatt's Falls)

Webster's Falls, near Hamilton
Canadian Souvenir Post Card
Stanley Mills Co., Limited, Hamilton, Canada
Postmarked July 15, 1905



WEBSTER'S FALLS, NEAR HAMILTON, CANADA

Stanley Mills Co., Limited, Hamilton, Canada 1102

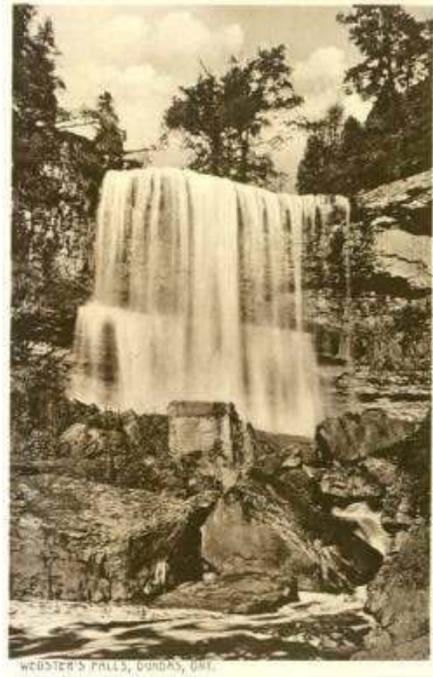


Webster's Falls
Private Post Card
L. McC. Co., Made in Canada
Postmarked April 16, 1906



Webster's Falls near Hamilton
Postmarked July 8, 1907

Webster's Falls, Dundas, Ont.
*Rumsey & Co., Ltd., 1528 Queen
St. West, Toronto, Canada
unused*



Webster's Falls
*Rumsey & Co., Ltd., 1528 Queen
St. West, Toronto, Canada
Postmarked illegible*